Joint SMI and ICTMD Ireland Postgraduate Conference 2026

MTU Cork School of Music

Union Quay, Cork City

14-15 January 2026

WELCOME

A dhaoine uaisle, a chomhghleacaithe, agus a chairde go léir,

Ar son choiste na comhdhála, an dá chumann, SMI agus CITCR Éireann, agus ar son Cheol-Scoil Chorcaí, Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Mumhan, tá fáilte is fiche romhaibh go léir chuig ár gcomhdháil bhliantúil iarchéime. On behalf of the conference committee, the two associations, the SMI and ICTMD Ireland, and on behalf of MTU Cork School of Music, you are all very welcome to our annual postgraduate conference.

The joint SMI/ICTMD Ireland Postgraduate Annual Conference provides students and early-career researchers with a significant platform to disseminate their research to peers at comparable stages in their academic trajectories. The conference offers a vital forum for mutual learning, the establishment of scholarly networks across diverse research areas, and the initiation of foundational steps toward careers in music research. Since its inception, the event has been distinguished by its emphasis on collegiality and interdisciplinarity – principles that have consistently guided the efforts of our dedicated organising and programming committees. We encourage participants to embrace and extend these values throughout their engagement at MTU Cork.

We are delighted to welcome Dr. Joanne Cusack (Maynooth University) as the keynote speaker, presenting *"Insider Action Research: Overcoming Challenges in the Field."* Dr. Cusack's most recent publication, *Women in Irish Traditional Music* (Boydell & Brewer, 2025), underscores her expertise, and we are excited that she will be joining us at MTU Cork to engage with the conference.

We are delighted to reintroduce the Careers Forum to this year's programme and are deeply grateful to our speakers for contributing their knowledge and insights, inspiring the next generation of scholars and practitioners.

As co-chairs of the conference, we wish to express our profound gratitude to Professor Wolfgang Marx, President of the SMI, and Dr Susan Motherway, Chairperson of ICTMD Ireland, for their invaluable guidance and support. We are also deeply indebted to our host, MTU Cork School of Music, for generously providing their facilities and for their assistance in facilitating the organisation of the conference. Our sincere thanks extend to the members of the conference and programming committees as well as our conference assistants, whose dedication and commitment have been essential to the successful realisation of this event.

We hope that all participants find the conference both stimulating and rewarding.

Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick, **Eric Browne**, **and Obumneke Anyanwu**

Conference Co-Chairs

Wednesday 14 January 2026

11:00–16:00 Registration **FOYER**	
12:00–12:20 Welcome	**CURTIS AUDITORIUM**

Welcome from Conference Co-Chairs	**Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick** (Munster Technological University), **Eric Browne** (Munster Technological University), **Obumneke Anyanwu** (Dublin City University)
Welcome on behalf of SMI	**Wolfgang Marx**, SMI President
Welcome on behalf of ICTMD Ireland	**Susan Motherway**, ICTMD Ireland Chair

12:30–13:00 Welcome Concert	**CURTIS AUDITORIUM**
13:00–14:00 Keynote	**CURTIS AUDITORIUM**

Chair Susan Motherway (Munster Technological University)

Joanne Cusack (Maynooth University)
Insider Action Research: Overcoming Challenges in the Field

14:00–14:30 Refreshment Break	**FOYER**

14:30–16:00 Session 1		
ROOM: 217 (Bridget Doolan Room)	**ROOM: 213**	**ROOM: 215**
1a Musical Dialogues (Lecture Recitals) **Chair:** Anna Barbara Falkenau (University of Galway)	**1b Compositional Approaches** **Chair:** Nicole Grimes (Trinity College Dublin)	**1c Music Analysis** **Chair:** Kevin Boushel (Dublin City University)
Connor Wilcox (Royal Irish Academy of Music) Roseingrave in Italy: Experimentalism and Anachronism in the Harpsichord Suites of 1728 **Neda Nikolić (University of Limerick)** Towards a New Musical Synthesis: Dialogue between Balkan and Irish Music	**Dylan Murphy** (Maynooth University Beckettian Reversibility – A Compositional Approach to Samuel Beckett's Trilogy: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*	**Hamidreza Golestanisani** (Dublin City University) Musical Narrative Theory and Holy Minimalism: Arvo Pärt's *Für Alina*
	Hayden Kline (Trinity College Dublin) Polytunality: an Under-explored Tool for Creating Unique Intervals in Compositions	**Iulia-Daria Iacob** (University of Art and Design, Cluj-Napoca) *Imaginary Music*: A Chôric Reading of Octavian Nemescu's work
	Santiago Kodela (TU Dublin) From Fretboard to Choir: Translating Embodied Guitar Knowledge in *Tag* for SATB Voices	**Fidelma Nugent** (Dublin City University) Time, Eternity, and Faith in Sound: Early Reflections on Catholic Theology in Olivier Messiaen's Choral Works

16:15–17:45 Session 2		
ROOM: 217 (Bridget Doolan Room)	**ROOM: 213**	**ROOM: 215**
2a Piano Music in Ireland (Lecture Recitals) **Chair:** Kerry Houston (Technological University Dublin)	**2b: Music Pedagogy** **Chair:** Adrian Scahill (Maynooth University)	**2c: Music Therapy** **Chair:** Adam Behan (Maynooth University)
Órán Halligan (Royal Irish Academy of Music) *Strains of Other Days*: Constructing a Musical Lineage of Native Irish Piano Works	**Joan O'Malley** (TU Dublin) "Trilby-Mania" and The Secrets of Svengali: Popular Perceptions of Classical Singers and Vocal Pedagogy in the Late Nineteenth/Early Twentieth Century	**Kate Daly** (University of Limerick) 'Crossing the Threshold': Facilitating Group Singing in Addiction Recovery Contexts

in Late eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Ireland **Orly Watson** (Royal Irish Academy of Music/Queen's University Belfast) The Dim Murmur from the Duns of Men: Piano Music in Ireland (1750–1950)	**Decheng Shao** (University College Cork) Finding Space Between Standardization: Liminal Belonging and Participatory Ensemble within State-Run Secondary Schooling in Suzhou, China	**Fiona Kelly** (University College Cork) Exploring the Impact of Caregiver Training on the Facilitation of Music-Based Activities in Residential Care Settings
	Stephen Lane (Munster Technological University) New Approaches to the Teaching of Music Literacy: Exploring the Impact of New Resources on the Development of Generalist Teacher Confidence and Self-Efficacy in Irish Primary Schools	**Hannah Healy** (University of Limerick) Giving Grief a Voice: Exploring the Use of Music Therapy to Support Children Who are Experiencing Grief (Recital)

18:00–18:45   Wine Reception and Award Presentation   **FOYER**

19:00   Social Gathering   **THE COURTYARD AT SOBER LANE SEE MAP**

Thursday 15 January 2026

09:30–12:00   Registration
FOYER

09:30–11:15   Session 3

ROOM: 212	ROOM: 213	
3a Lecture Recitals **Chair:** Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick (Munster Technological University)	**3b Masters Student Presentations (10 minutes)** **Chair:** Cheryl Tan (Trinity College Dublin)	
Brian Sheehan (Munster Technological University) Data Sonification and Listening for Knowledge	**Aoife Sheridan** (Maynooth University) From Eibhlín to Ellen: The Incorporation and Adaptation of Irish Songs in Eighteenth-Century Art Music	
	Laura McNally (Munster Technological University)	

	Irish Dance from a Holistic Perspective Among Young Adults
	Katie Feeney (University of Oxford) The Nocturne: A Corpus Analysis of John Field and Frédéric Chopin's Piano Nocturnes
Xiangyu Zhang (Royal Irish Academy of Music) The Evolution of Chinese Oboe Repertoires: Tradition, Innovation and Cultural Synthesis	**Javier Noriega Molina** (Trinity College Dublin/Royal College of Music, London) The Emergence of the Professional Violist: Repertoire and Specialisation c. 1750–c. 1950
	Catherine Lietz (Maynooth University) Irishness, Hybridity, and Artistry in Síomha's *Infinite Space*
	Brigid Cryan (University College Cork) Random Following with a MaxMSP Device: Exploring Perceived Autonomy and Phrasal Parsing
	Charlotte Daun (University of Limerick) Why Community Music Matters

11:15–11:30 Refreshment Break   FOYER

11:30–13:00 Session 4		
ROOM: 212	**ROOM: Curtis Auditorium**	**ROOM: 215**
4a Opera Studies **Chair:** Michael Lee, Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland	**4b Music, Dance, and Climate Action (Lecture-Recitals)** **Chair:** Maria Judge (Munster Technological University)	**4c Cultural Connections** **Chair:** Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (University of Galway)
Leanne Fitzgerald (TU Dublin) Exploring Research and Innovation in Jennifer Walshe's Opera *Mars* (2025)	**Aleksandr Nisse** (TU Dublin) Detailed Analysis of *Pleonexia*: Ecosystems and Harmonic Series in Contemporary Composition	**Marta Siermantowska** (TU Dublin) The Impact of Cultural Connections on the Music of Richard Galliano
Aisling Fitzgerald (University of Galway) Putting on the Trousers for the Trouser Role … in Opera Leadership in Ireland	**Michelle Palmer** (University of Galway) What Can Ecofeminist Dance Theatre and Eco Soma Approaches Offer Dramaturgy and Performance in the Midst of Climate Crisis?	**Kevin Ferreira Shortall** (University of Limerick) Alec Finn's Bouzouki: Transcriptions, Analysis and Educational Strategies
Qian Le (Queen's University Belfast) Voice, Character, and Collaboration: Anastasia Robinson and Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula*		**Eoin Kearns** (Queen's University Belfast) Irish Traditional Music and Musical Diplomacy of the Irish State in China

13:00–14:00 Lunch	BISTRO

14:00–15:15 Careers Forum	CURTIS AUDITORIUM

Chair: Wolfgang Marx (University College Dublin)
Panel discussion with **Joanne Cusack,** Maynooth University, **Nicole Grimes**, Trinity College Dublin, **Claire Layton**, Music Development Officer, Music Generation Cork City, **Michael Lee**, Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland, **Róisín Maher,** Munster Technological University & Finding a Voice Festival, **Eoghan Neff,** Musician

15:15–16:15 Session 5

ROOM: 212	ROOM: 213	ROOM: 215
5a Song Categorisation **Chair:** Deirdre Collins (Munster Technological University)	**5b Festivals** **Chair:** Kelly Boyle (University College Cork)	**5c Twentieth-Century Irish Music** **Chair:** Anne Ralph (Munster Technological University)
Michael Young (Dublin City University) Song Categorisation and Style in Musical Theatre, with a focus on *The Bridges of Madison County* by Jason Robert Brown	**Laura Reese** (University of Limerick) "Time Travel to the Greatest Party Since Camelot": The History of American Renaissance Festivals	**Christina Nastos** (University of Würzburg) Shaping Irishness: The Evaluation of Irish Identities in the Music and Work of Aloys Fleischmann
Aoife Ní Laoire (Dublin City University) A Love for the Ages or Lost in Definition? Rethinking the Categorisation of Traditional Irish-Language Love Songs in Modern Times	**Katrina Tracey Cuddy** (Queen's University Belfast) The *Sonorities* Festival and the Belfast Soundscape: 1981-1999	**Dylan Kelly** (Dublin City University) *Ultima Rerum*: A Reappraisal of the Later Career and Music of Gerard Victory (1921-1995)

16:30 Conference Close CURTIS AUDITORIUM

Ciara O'Leary Fitzpatrick (Munster Technological University), **Eric Browne** (Munster Technological University), **Obumneke Anyanwu** (Dublin City University)

Keynote Presentation

Insider Action Research: Overcoming Challenges in the Field*

Joanne Cusack (Maynooth University)

In *Women in Irish Traditional Music* (Boydell & Brewer, 2025), I found that, in comparison to men, women and other marginalised practitioners continue to face greater challenges when participating in the recreational spaces, and pursuing and maintaining a career in the professional spaces of the Irish traditional music scene.

As a woman, Irish traditional musician, activist, and researcher, my entire journey to publication in addition to dealing with the severity of my research findings has not been easy; a journey that is still incomplete as I continue to lobby for inclusivity and safety in the arts. As I continue my advocacy work, I can now begin to assess and reflect on the complexities that I have faced in navigating my positionality over the past eight years while trying to achieve my actionary goals, and the consequences of being both the researched and the researcher.

This talk will unpack these layers and examine how my activism as a cofounder of the volunteer grassroots feminist organisation, FairPlé, influenced my research direction and caused the study to transform into a broad conceptual feminist framework that was continuously shaped by my community's most urgent needs. While there were certainly many benefits to my positionality, I document the challenges that arose over the course of the project and discuss the strategies deployed to confront and overcome such challenges.

*Please note a trigger/content warning for the keynote address: There are some topics discussed that some may find distressing: sexual violence; #MeToo campaign; harassment; identity-based discrimination.

Abstracts

Session 1a: Musical Dialogues
(Lecture Recitals)

Roseingrave in Italy: Experimentalism and Anachronism in the Harpsichord Suites of 1728

Connor Wilcox (Royal Irish Academy of Music)

In the context of eighteenth-century musical life, Thomas Roseingrave is seen as a minor composer and performer, overshadowed by his now more famous contemporaries Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frederick Handel and Domenico Scarlatti. There is a comparatively small body of existing research on Roseingrave, with a similarly small body of commercial recordings currently in existence.

Roseingrave's idiosyncratic approach to harmony was criticized by his contemporaries variously as "harsh and disgusting" and "licentious and extravagant". In more recent times Roseingrave's compositional powers have even been linked to his "apparently unstable mental state". However, there is more to the picture than an eccentric composer indulging in experiments. During his four years in Italy, and through his relationship with the Scarlattis, Roseingrave would have become familiar with the harmonically adventurous madrigals of composers such as Carlo Gesualdo and Luzzasco Luzzaschi and, when considered within this context, Roseingrave's style finds a harmonic model which has until now been missing. This lecture recital explores parallels between Roseingrave, Gesualdo and Luzzaschi, and shows how Roseingrave integrates an adventurous harmonic approach into the idiom of eighteenth-century keyboard music. The lecture recital includes a performance of Roseingrave's Sixth Suite in E minor on modern piano and explores issues of performance on a modern instrument.

Towards a New Musical Synthesis: Dialogue Between Balkan and Irish Music

Neda Nikolić (University of Limerick)

This lecture-recital is based on my PhD research titled *The Global Frula: The creative process in a cross-cultural setting.* This research emerges from my own practice, rooted in the Balkan music, and recently engaged in Irish traditional music. The goal is to examine the new creative connection between these two traditions through the embodied engagement with the deep-rooted practices of the Serbian frula and Irish tin whistle. While earlier interactions between Balkan and Irish musical practices offer insight into the Irish view of Balkan music, this research reverses that perspective. By blending the two traditions into a new musical form, I create a fresh connection grounded in arts practice and ethnomusicology.

An important concept which frames a critical performance output in this research is 'bi-musicality' (Hood 1960). This concept is critically engaged in the context of what I frame as personal case studies that occurred during my MA and PhD studies at the University of Limerick. Learning and performing at the Irish World Academy consciously and unconsciously shaped both Irish and Serbian performance practices but also generated a peculiar liminal space where differences and similarities between these two traditions created a cross-cultural connection which is evidenced in my performance practices.

This lecture-recital will blend the performative fragments of my practice with theoretical structures in order to show the new and unique connection between Irish and Balkan traditions. As a result it will also demonstrate a deep critical connection between theory and practice in the development of a new musical synthesis.

Session 1b: Compositional Approaches

Beckettian Reversibility – A Compositional approach to Samuel Beckett's Trilogy: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*

Dylan Patrick Murphy (Maynooth University)

This paper will focus upon the interaction between 20th Century Irish Literature and Contemporary Classical Art Music Composition, focussing on a gap uncovered in the research of structures within music that relies on literature for a compositional basis. I will analyse my compositional output in an auto-ethnographical construct; outlining why I made certain choices, and how practice informed research guided me compositionally.

Within my compositional practice, a Postmodern element is also seen, and will be addressed, with relevance to each musical work; with Jean Baudrillard's Simulacra and Simulation being the theoretical framework.

My paper will be based upon new musical conceptions and how these can be utilised as structural aspects within my music; specifically relating to the reversible nature of Samuel Beckett's trilogy: *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable,* as outlined within "Beckett's Principle of Reversibility: Chiasmus and the "Shape of Ideas" by Van Hulle.

I will utilise a series of new compositional works for a variety of ensembles.

1. The Beginning Again (Duo Vocal + Solo Piano)
2. the silence, the end, the beginning (Solo Cello)
3. Where Now? Who Now? When Now? (Solo Viola)

In conclusion I will analyse where my research and compositional output is currently with fragments of *Gruaim ag Gealánach san Amhdhorchacht* – For Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and SATB Choir; which is the culmination of my Joycean compositional research.

Polytunality: an Under-explored Tool for Creating Unique Intervals in Compositions

Hayden Kline (Trinity College Dublin)

In songwriting and musical composition, the system of tuning used is often treated as an a priori element, its utility predetermined before any actual note is put to paper. While this works to streamline the compositional process, there are an infinite number of unexplored microtonal note relationships that can lead to a trove of new sounds for artists to use. This concept can be referred to as "Polytunality," in which a piece of music contains multiple tuning systems, acting simultaneously.

While no two tuning systems are identical, they can be sorted into categories that designate them based on their function, their origin, or their construction. "Just" systems are derived from different equations used to solve for note value relationships (for example, fifths are often designated as having a 3:2 relationship with their tonics). "Equally-Temperamental" systems are mathematically devised, splitting an octave into a delineated number of equally-spaced notes, while other "Temperamental" systems ("Well-" and "Linear-") take flaws of other systems and alter them to fit octaves. "Non-Octaval" systems explore operating outside the bounds of a traditional octave structure, refusing to repeat at the 2:1 expected relationship and instead continuing with new notes. And finally, "Ethnomusicological" systems are ones that have been culturally created and are used in specific contexts.

"Polytunality" is the concept of using these systems against one another. While work has been done to compose music in various tuning systems, there is still work to be done in the application of multiple systems working together simultaneously. For example, what qualities arise out of a duet when one voice is in 13-tone equal temperament and the other is using 5-limit just intonation? This paper is a study looking at the beginnings of this research, as well as what work has already been done in this field.

From Fretboard to Choir: Translating Embodied Guitar Knowledge in Tag for SATB Voices

Santiago Kodela (Technological University Dublin)

This project presents a reflective account of a compositional process viewed through the lens of embodied guitar knowledge. It examines how physical engagement with the guitar, including gesture, spatial awareness and improvisation, informs the generation and development of musical ideas that form the foundation of a new work. *Tag*, written for unaccompanied SATB choir, emerged from my interest in expanding my choral writing skills and was developed under the mentorship of composer Dr. Anselm McDonnell through the Contemporary Music Centre. It investigates how embodied practice using the guitar fretboard as a framework shapes harmonic and melodic material which is translated into vocal writing.

Methodologically, the process was twofold. The first stage involved the selection, analysis and discussion of the text, during which collaboration with poet Seán Watmore helped establish the overall character and thematic direction of the piece. The second stage consisted of guided improvisation across the guitar fretboard

to define the criteria, boundaries and limitations that shaped the initial musical material.

Within the context of my current doctoral research on embodied composition and performance, this project contributes to the discourse by demonstrating how idiomatic instrumental gestures can serve as generative models, in this case, for a vocal ensemble. This first creative and academic output in my doctoral project establishes the foundation for a broader investigation into composition through embodied instrumental knowledge. It aims to expand my compositional approach by writing for other instruments, learning from them, and reintegrating their characteristics into new works for guitar, thereby completing a cyclical process of creative feedback.

Session 1c: Music Analysis

Musical Narrative Theory and Holy Minimalism: Arvo Pärt's *Für Alina*

Hamidreza Golestanisani (Dublin City University)

This presentation examines how instrumental music can be approached as narrative, focusing on the work of Arvo Pärt and the aesthetics of Holy Minimalism. Narrative theory offers ways of listening to instrumental music as a process or journey, even when no text or explicit program is present. Holy Minimalism, however, is often understood as a musical language that resists narrative thinking, favoring simplicity, silence, stasis, and a contemplative inward focus. This raises an important question: can narrative listening still function within a style that seems to avoid development and dramatic progression?

To address this, the presentation draws on James Jacob Liszka's definition of narrative as a transvaluation of culturally meaningful differences through a sequence of actions. This broader understanding allows narrative to be considered beyond literary forms. Building on this idea, Byron Almén suggests that music can also be understood narratively, as musical oppositions and values shift and transform over time rather than through literal storytelling.

At the center of the discussion is Pärt's *Für Alina* (1976), the first work composed in his tintinnabuli style. Despite its extreme notational simplicity, the piece evokes a fragile yet deeply expressive sense of emergence and return. The lecture shows that even music which appears to resist narrative can still be heard narratively.

Imaginary Music: A Chôric Reading of Octavian Nemescu's Work

Iulia-Daria Iacob (University of Art and Design, Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

The work of Romanian composer Octavian Nemescu (1940-2020), particularly his graphic scores, is positioned as an inquiry into the *Semantic Capacities of Music*, a concept he first addressed in his 1983 doctoral thesis. A quintessential figure in Romanian spectralism, Nemescu's musical creation and writings are thoroughly

anchored in ideas of minimalism, primordiality, processualism, and ritual. In his vision of *Imaginary Music*, he describes an *unexternalized* and *anti-spectatorial* music existing solely as acoustic potential. This concept is in profound resonance with Julia Kristeva's notion of the *chôra,* a pre-linguistic, rhythmic, and affective space of drives and impulses that precedes structured meaning. In Kristeva's model, meaning is a continuous negotiation between the *Semiotic* order – located within the *chôra* – and the *Symbolic* order, which designates social and linguistic convention. The inner sonorization of imaginary music thus rejects the symbolic functions of conventional music composition and performance. This paper proposes a *choric* reading of Nemescu's score *Is the King Going to Die?!* (1968), a staged deterioration of an instrumentalist's performance: a ritualized death of the Symbolic. Through an interdisciplinary semiological and iconographical reading, we aim to situate Nemescu's score as a visual and performative manifestation of the fragility, exhaustion, and ultimate philosophical failure of musical tradition and convention. The stabilized and externalized performance is displaced into pure potentiality through the suspension of musical language. By unifying the visions of Nemescu and Kristeva, this analysis aims to further the formulation of a *vocabulary* of musical iconology.

Time, Eternity, and Faith in Sound: Early Reflections on Catholic Theology in Olivier Messiaen's Choral Works

Fidelma Nugent (Dublin City University)

This paper presents early-stage doctoral research exploring the role of Catholic theology in the choral music of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). Messiaen's sacred choral compositions, from *O sacrum convivium!* onwards, articulate a distinctive vision of time and eternity that bridges theological reflection and musical innovation. Alongside these explicitly sacred works, the paper also considers *Cinq Rechants* (1948) as a liminal case: while not a liturgical or overtly sacred composition, it reflects Messiaen's Catholic understanding of love, temporality, and transcendence, shaped by his lifelong theological commitments.

Central to Messiaen's creative philosophy is the conviction that music can reveal divine mystery through sound: a belief rooted in Catholic sacramentality and eschatological conceptions of time. Drawing on preliminary study of Messiaen's writings (*Technique de mon langage musical, Traité de rythme, de couleur et d'ornithologie*), alongside key theological and aesthetic sources such as St Thomas Aquinas, Hans Urs von Balthasar, and Jacques Maritain, this paper outlines a methodological framework for reading Messiaen's choral language as a site of theological meaning. It will discuss how specific rhythmic and harmonic features such as non-retrogradable rhythms, added values, and harmonic stasis function as musical analogues of sacred or transcendent time across both sacred and para-sacral works.

As this research is in its early phase, the paper focuses on conceptual groundwork rather than completed analytical case studies. Its aim is to clarify an interdisciplinary approach combining theological hermeneutics and musical analysis, and to open dialogue on how Messiaen's choral music – sacred and non-liturgical alike – may be understood as a coherent expression of Catholic thought.

Session 2a: Piano Music in Ireland
(Lecture Recitals)

Strains of Other Days: Constructing a Musical Lineage of Native Irish Piano Works in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Ireland

Órán Halligan (Royal Irish Academy of Music)

German-born composer, teacher, publisher and inventor Johann Bernhard Logier (*b* 1777) spent the majority of his working life (1809 to 1846) in Dublin. He composed a variety of works including songs, piano sonatas, works for flute and bugle, military overtures, a piano concerto and the music for a melodrama based on the life of Brian Ború. His solo piano work *Strains of Other Days* (1810) is notable for its extensive use of traditional melodies, its publication occurring in the immediate wake of Moore and Stevenson's immensely popular *Irish Melodies* (1808).

Strains of Other Days is significant in the development of Ireland's native keyboard works, yet it has received little research, with no commercial recordings of the work available. Whilst *Irish Melodies* aided in popularising traditional airs, *Strains of Other Days* uses each air as a starting point from which to build a longer-form composition. It contains several early instances of a musical form that would see growing popularity both in and outside of Ireland throughout the nineteenth century, the keyboard fantasia on an Irish theme.

This lecture recital constructs a lineage of Irish national keyboard music, tracing developments in style and changing approaches to the use of Irish melodies through the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, using *Strains of Other Days* as its focal point. The lecture recital will conclude with a performance of the first volume of *Strains of Other Days*, which contains the themes "O Blame not the Bard" and "The Bard's Legacy".

The Dim Murmur from the Duns of Men: Piano Music in Ireland (1750 – 1950)

Orly Watson (Royal Irish Academy of Music / Queen's University Belfast)

I am compiling the first comprehensive scholarly anthology of piano music written in Ireland. I have unearthed several categories of significant material which is largely inaccessible to musicians and the public:

1. Manuscript sources. Much material was never published; some exists in only a single handwritten copy.
2. Historic printed editions. Many works were published only once and subsequently fell into obscurity. Such editions are often of extreme rarity.
3. Manuscript and printed music which is specifically not archived in any of the libraries but which exists in private collections. Much is perilously close to being irretrievably lost, and its survival will depend largely on proactive scholars.

I contend that this work reshapes our understanding of the evolution of Irish classical music, raises questions about the nature of its style, and brings the work of émigré, female and other composers from underrepresented groups to the fore. It interprets Irish music alongside European Romanticism/Nationalism/Modernism and posits fresh perspectives on key figures and their motivations. I am preparing a practical volume for performers.

My presentation will contain:

1. Overview: composers/works of interest.
2. Analytical section with musical illustrations from works by Edna Baiss, Cuypers, and Esposito played on the piano. Considering pianistic innovations, stylistic tropes, developments in musical parameters including harmony/rhythm/extramusical and folk materials.
3. Discussion of how competing figures saw the formation of Irish style as a means to both advance disparate causes (focussing on how prevailing trends silenced some of the most eloquent voices) and capitalise on continental developments.

Session 2b: Music Pedagogy

"Trilby-Mania" and The Secrets of Svengali: Popular Perceptions of Classical Singers and Vocal Pedagogy in the Late Nineteenth/Early Twentieth Century

Joan O'Malley (Technological University Dublin)

Trilby (1894) is a novel by George du Maurier (1834–1896) in which the eponymous heroine, a tone-deaf Irish artist's model called Trilby O'Ferrall, is transformed into a famous diva by her evil teacher Svengali's use of hypnotism. The novel's popularity unleashed the craze of "Trilby-mania", which resulted in the merchandising of a variety of products, multiple stage and film adaptations, and a vocal tutor apparently written by 'Svengali', in which he described his pedagogical strategies (he denied using hypnotism). *The Secrets of Svengali: On Singing, Singers, Teachers and Critics* (1922) was written by John H. Duval (1875-1962), who taught singers at the Metropolitan Opera, and was positively reviewed by contemporary critics.

This presentation will discuss Duval's light-hearted satire on vocal pedagogy literature. It will also explore how "Trilby-mania" reflected popular perceptions of classical singing and pedagogy, and the "mesmerisation" of audiences via mass media and the gramophone. It may also have encompassed contemporary anxieties concerning recent developments in telegraphy, an invisible, apparently "magical" means of communication. This resonated with the increasing traction of Spiritualism, in which the (usually) female body was used as a conduit for materialising phenomena. Many female mediums acquired wealth and notoriety as a result, and this may correlate to anxieties regarding the agency of other professional women in the public eye, such as opera singers. "Svengali's" hypnotic power over "Trilby" may have represented an imaginative reversal of the reputed ability of female singers such as Nellie Melba to "mesmerise" audiences.

Finding Space Between Standardization: Liminal Belonging and Participatory Ensemble within State-Run Secondary Schooling in Suzhou, China

Decheng Shao (University College Cork)

This paper explores how participatory ensemble practices in a state-run secondary school in Suzhou create liminal spaces of belonging within an education system shaped by standardization, discipline, and Gaokao-oriented pressure. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between November 2024 and June 2025 – including sustained participant observation, informal musicking with students, and semi-structured interviews – this study examines how, active intervention in repertoire and rehearsal design, Extracurricular Ensemble Club temporarily suspends institutional convention and enables alternative ways of being, feeling, and learning.

Rather than confronting the school system, the Ensemble Club occupies in-between spaces – neither fully formal nor informal – where emotional support is provided to students, shared musical decision-making, and sense of collective interaction. Guided by the teacher, students discuss repertoire choices, organize rehearsal time, informally teach one another, and shape the final performance, cultivating liminal belonging: a felt but unofficial form of attachment, safety, and meaning-making that arises from musicking rather than institutional recognition. These musicking spaces function as temporary "breathing zones," offering psychosocial relief from exam-centered schooling while enabling the continuity of musical interests beyond state-prescribed purposes.

These practices do not oppose the state-run education system but rather negotiate co-existence within it – subtly reshaping the school experience emotionally. By highlighting how participatory musicking fosters micro-communities of care, informality, and continuity within formal structures, this study contributes to debates in ethnomusicology, music education, and the sociology of schooling on how relationally grounded, emotionally sustaining practices can flourish amidst high-stakes academic environments.

New Approaches to the Teaching of Music Literacy: Exploring the Impact of New Resources on the Development of Generalist Teacher confidence and Self-Efficacy in Irish Primary Schools

Stephen Lane (Mary Immaculate College Limerick / MTU Cork School of Music)

Situated within the context of primary level schooling in Ireland, this PhD project is examining the complex issue of primary teacher confidence and the teaching of formal musical skills. Despite an abundance of research on primary teacher confidence and issues of self-efficacy in the teaching of music, studies have yet to investigate a) the potential of accessible, digital resources and innovative approaches in the teaching of music literacy, b) the pivotal role that primary teachers can play as pedagogical consultants in the development of digital resources, and c) the impact a new approach

to the teaching of music literacy can play in developing teacher confidence and self-efficacy in the teaching of music and in pupils' musical development.

This presentation will explore the potential that innovative, pedagogical resources and approaches to the teaching and learning of formal musical knowledge and skills (defined in this context as music literacy) within Irish primary education, can enhance primary teachers' self-efficacy in music teaching with the ultimate aim of sustainable musical development in pupils.

The paper will also report on field work currently in progress: a case-study in one school, where 9 teachers are working with new music literacy materials. Preliminary findings highlight themes in the extant literature and is establishing an evidence base for accessible materials as enablers of sustainability and progression in primary music education.

Session 2c: Music Therapy

"Crossing the Threshold" – Facilitating Group Singing in Addiction Recovery Contexts

Kate Daly (University of Limerick)

The "Practice as Research" (PaR) paradigm posits there is a constant dialogue between one's practice (know-how), critical reflection (know-what) and contextuality situating the practice (know-that) (Nelson 2013). Through PaR theoretical underpinnings, this investigation explores the phenomenon of facilitating group singing in addiction recovery contexts. "Metaphor" theory (Johnson 1987) informs this PaR, not just as a linguistic device, but as a way of understanding how patterns from one experience (the recovery singing group) are expressed in a different domain (life outside this group). There is potential for embodied musical experiences to provide activities where positive recovery behaviours can be modelled, and recovery capital developed (Best & Hennessy 2022; Best et al. 2016; Foley et al. 2021).

The conceptual framework of recovery capital suggests four key resource areas for a person in recovery: physical, human, social and cultural (Cloud & Granfield 2008; Granfield & Cloud 2025; 1999). Cultural recovery capital proposes that engaging in community activities can be a resource for one's recovery (Foley et al. 2021). In this research people with lived experience of recovery were invited to participate in facilitated group singing sessions – *Crossing the Threshold* from the comfortable and "known" to the creative and imaginative, exploring new perspectives and ways of supporting recovery.

For this presentation insights will be shared from participants' feedback and findings from the delivered sessions, including facilitator's reflections and field notes. Also, the emerging themes of creative risk-taking, reciprocity and the multiplicity of pathways in recovery will be discussed.

Exploring the Impact of Caregiver Training on the Facilitation of Music-Based Activities in Residential Care Settings

Fiona Kelly (University College Cork)

As the population of older adults living in residential care continues to grow, maintaining a good quality of life remains a key goal for health and social care services. Research indicates that factors like loneliness and poor social wellbeing are associated with poorer health outcomes in older age, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach to health and wellbeing for improved outcomes. Contributions from a wide range of disciplines have identified music engagement as a promising activity with the potential to affect multiple health and well-being domains. Concurrently, there is growing interest among caregiving professionals in incorporating music into their practice, leveraging their existing knowledge of residents to promote engagement. Caregivers have expressed difficulty in providing such activities to their residents, and so greater support for caregivers is critical in enabling the provision of activities that contribute to resident well-being. This paper explores how caregiver education and training can enable the use of music in a residential care setting. Previously employed training methods and that of a recently completed 18-week caregiver-led music programme are considered. The analysis examines how theoretical and practical approaches influence caregivers' experience in facilitating music-based activities. The paper also explores the environmental, workforce, and logistical challenges encountered by both caregivers and organisational staff, and discusses potential mitigation strategies for creating the sustainable integration of music within residential care environments.

Giving Grief a Voice: Exploring the use of Music Therapy to Support Children Who Are Experiencing Grief

Hannah Healy (University of Limerick)

This lecture-recital presents the findings of my ongoing doctoral research, which explores how music therapy can support children who are experiencing grief. Drawing on an integration of literature, qualitative research interviews, participatory research and clinical case material, the presentation will define grief in its multiple contexts, including bereavement, separation, and loss associated with parental imprisonment and explore how music therapy can support children who are experiencing grief. The research highlights the ways in which music therapy offers a creative, expressive, and relational medium through which children can explore and process experiences of grief. The lecture will also incorporate arts-informed responses, including original songs and poetry created as part of the research process, which serve to support and further explain it central themes. This presentation provides an overview of an almost-completed PhD, illustrating how practice-based research in music therapy can illuminate the intersections between creativity, emotion, and resilience in the lives of grieving children.

Session 3a: Lecture Recitals

Data Sonification and Listening for Knowledge

Brian Sheehan (Munster Technological University)

This lecture-recital will explore the overlaps and boundaries between practices of listening for knowledge (as understood in the field of Sound Studies) and data sonification (the technique of rendering sound in response to data and interactions, and the core concern of Auditory Display research). It presents early findings from a musical arts practice PhD research project on the topic of data sonification.

Examples of listening practices and data sonification will be discussed to see how data sonification can be situated in relation to more well-established ways of gathering knowledge through sound. The nature of sonic knowledge and sonic thinking will be discussed. Implications for the existing definitions of data sonification will be explored.

These issues will be musically embodied and further explored using software developed by the researcher in PureData, a digital synthesis programming environment. The analysis techniques normally used to create a spectrogram (a visual representation of the frequency components of a sound) are instead used to create an auditory display that allows the mathematical analysis of musically performed sound to be heard, explored and understood in a musical performance context. Musical material performed by the researcher will be processed using this software, showing how analysis can generate an aesthetic, and how sonic-gestural knowledge is experienced differently from visual-spatial knowledge.

The Evolution of Chinese Oboe Repertoires: Tradition, Innovation and Cultural Synthesis

Xiangyu Zhang (Royal Irish Academy of Music)

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the oboe has developed rapidly in China, which now has one of the largest numbers of oboe learners in the world. However, within the conservatory system, both domestic and international conservatories still primarily focus on Western repertoires, particularly German and French works. In contrast, Chinese violin repertoires have repeatedly graced international stages and won awards in major competitions. Although some non-Western oboe repertoires, such as the works by Isang Yun and Makoto Shinohara, have become required repertoire in major international competitions and widely studied in academia, Chinese oboe repertoires are significantly lacking in both international recognition and academic research. Existing research is largely limited to sporadic analyses of individual works, with limited systematic research on the development of timbre and performance techniques. Nevertheless, these works have been repeatedly selected for performances by renowned oboists, demonstrating their artistic value.

This lecture recital explores the development of Chinese oboe repertoires from the perspective of performers, focusing on its transformation from early uniformity to contemporary innovations in timbre and performance techniques. The study reveals how this stylistic evolution has expanded the interpretative space and expressive

possibilities for oboists and through the performance of excerpts from three representative Chinese oboe works Qigang Chen's *Extase*, Gang Chen's *Nang Ma*, and Guoquan Li's *Shepherdess* demonstrates the renewed vitality of the oboe within the Chinese musical context.

Session 3b: Master's Student Presentations

From Eibhlín to Ellen: The Incorporation and Adaptation of Irish Songs in Eighteenth-Century Art Music

Aoife Sheridan (Maynooth University)

In 1729, playwright Charles Coffey incorporated various pre-existing Irish songs and tunes into his ballad opera *The Beggar's Wedding*. In doing so he re-presented them both lyrically and musically. Included in these are vocal adaptations of instrumental tunes such as "Molly St George" and "Captain Magan" from John and William Neal's *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* (1724), with new lyrics suited to the themes of the ballad opera. Most famously, Coffey incorporated the Irish song "Eibhlín a Rúin", a hugely popular song at that time, and left a major footprint on its musical evolution and dissemination history. *The Beggar's Wedding* exploited the song's existing popularity as a traditional tune, which in turn prompted numerous other iterations. These notably included the Irish-language version sung by Kitty Clive and the set of harpsichord variations by Matthew Dubourg.

This paper will examine the individual approaches that Coffey, Clive, and Dubourg took when adapting "Eibhlín a Rúin" for their respective audiences, exploring the connections that arise in the musical and textual alterations. Significant differences between these versions encompassed changes related to key, rhythm, embellishment, and, naturally, lyrics. Bound up in this is the issue of the song's varying titles and spellings and the associated cultural implications; it appeared as everything from "Eleanór na Rún" to the heavily anglicized and phoneticized "Ellen A Roon". This paper will attempt to understand the methods and motivations behind the song's reinterpretations and its position as a marker of Anglo-Irish taste at this time.

Irish Dance from a Holistic Perspective among Young Adults

Laura McNally (Munster Technological University)

Through an in-depth lens, this study examines the lived experiences of Irish dancers, emphasizing the mental, social, and physical aspects that influence their involvement in the art form. This study collected detailed, first-hand accounts using qualitative research to reveal the intricate interactions between aspects affecting the development and well-being of dancers.

One important subject that came to light was the physical difficulties of Irish dancing, which exposed the rigorous training schedules, frequent injuries and physical fatigue that dancers' face. The accounts of the participants' highlighted the importance

of balanced training, appropriate injury treatment and increased nutritional and recovery support.

Social Support and community Dynamics, the second theme, looked at the two-sided character of social relationships in the dancing community. Positive impacts improved motivation and resilience, such as encouraging relationships with teachers and peers. However, social exclusion and isolation experiences brought to light the emotional concerns that come with the dance world's competitive structure.

Dancers' psychological stressors were described in the third theme, the Competitive Environment and its Effects. These include the emotional toll of rivalry and jealousy, performance anxiety, and high expectations for both oneself and other people. Although rivalry can promote greatness, its negative parts can damage relationships and mental well-being. Competition needs to be reframed, according to the study. This means there needs to be a strike of balance between ambition, emotional safety and personal growth.

Lastly, the concept of Mental and Emotional Wellbeing captured the dancers' emotional highs and lows. Despite the frequently mentioned anxiety and stress, the dancers also showed a great deal of drive, Strength and immense passion that frequently influenced their identities. This subject emphasizes the necessity of open communication regarding emotional difficulties in dance environments and easily accessible mental health support.

Overall, this research aims to add new knowledge to this area. The results of this study will aid future dancers, teachers and parents in relation to the overall health of a competitive Irish dancer.

The Nocturne: A Corpus Analysis of John Field and Frédéric Chopin's Piano Nocturnes

Katie Feeney (University of Oxford)

Assuming a dichotomy between classical form and romantic style is incorrect. The two are inevitably intertwined such that romantic expression is anchored in classical tradition. Norms within romantic genres are often established through deviation from classical frameworks; over time, a deformation of classical form may become a new romantic norm.

This paper explores the process through the piano nocturne, a genre whose stylistic and formal boundaries are indistinct. By comparing the nocturnes of John Field and Frédéric Chopin, clear ties to classical theories of form are established, while structural tendencies also appear through deviation from classical expectations. The Nocturne genre's statistical normativity is revealed in its use of ternary form, the compensatory functions of its codas, and its prioritisation of a quiet, serene ending. A separate analysis of John Field's revisions, retitling, and republishing of his nocturnes suggest the composer's own understanding of the genre.

The classical formal theories of William Caplin, James Hepokoski and Warren Darcy provide a basis to understand the influence of classical form on the Nocturnes, as well as highlighting their deviation from convention. The revival of the Formenlehre tradition created an influx of interest in deriving theories of form catered toward romantic music. Some of these more recent theories of romantic form by Janet Schmalfeldt, Steven Vande Moortele, Hepokoski and Darcy, and Caplin are consulted here. This comparative analysis highlights the relationship between romantic style and

classical form, as well as developing a better structural understanding of the nocturne through the lens of the genre's leading composers.

The Emergence of the Professional Violist: Repertoire and Specialisation c. 1750–c. 1950

Javier Noriega Molina (Trinity College Dublin/ Royal College of Music, London)

This paper examines the evolution of the viola's standing within the musical world from the latter half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the twentieth. The viola was accorded an instrument associated with less accomplished musicians and a limited soloistic role in the late eighteenth century. Initially relegated to providing harmonic support, the viola was often viewed as an alto violin and played as such. However, through an examination of the developing repertoire, the paper will chart a corresponding growth in the adeptness of viola playing. The viola is an unusually distinct illustration of players motivating composers to create new works. This was a significant departure from the usual symbiosis between composers and performers and becomes more and more prominent over time. During the Romantic era, composers became attracted to the viola's expressive and distinctive timbral qualities, which resulted in the creation of fascinating pieces for the instrument. The increasing demands of this new repertoire spurred the emergence of dedicated viola players in the 19th century who championed the instrument and advocated for its independent study and creation of new viola compositions. This dedication ultimately resulted in the consolidation of the viola's status as an autonomous instrument, well capable of fulfilling the role of soloist and played by professional and virtuoso musicians. There is no doubt that the viola is now a celebrated and significant instrument within the musical context.

Irishness, Hybridity, and Artistry in Síomha's *Infinite Space*

Catherine Lietz (Maynooth University)

County Clare-born singer, songwriter, and instrumentalist Síomha released her genre-defying debut album, *Infinite Space,* in 2022, blending styles of Irish traditional music, jazz, rock, folk, pop, funk, soul, and more into one cohesive project. Recorded in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA with collaborators like funk band Vulfpeck, Irish traditional fusion group the ollam, and poet Séamus Barra Ó Súilleabháin, the record brings together these diverse influences and embraces hybridity. Lyrical themes about nature, spiritualism, life, death, and love come together to create a revolutionary listening experience. In 2024, Síomha released the EP *Infinite Space (Reimagined),* in which she reimagines select songs from her discography with both the RTE Concert Orchestra and the Metropole Orkest, a jazz and pop orchestra based in the Netherlands. Though it's been three years since its original release, *Infinite Space* continues to feel alive through this reimagining as well as through its fresh live performances where the album is often accompanied by covers of songs by different Irish artists.

Síomha's use of the Irish language in her music as a native speaker, focus on sustainability and activism, status as a small independent artist, and unique global influences render *Infinite Space* a compelling body of work in the context of the current landscape of Irish musical artists on the world stage. My project aims to explore how *Infinite Space* engages with Irish heritage, identity, and culture through the album's live performances, collaborations with other artists, and an analysis of the musical language woven into the recordings.

Random Following with a MaxMSP Device: Exploring Perceived Autonomy and Phrasal Parsing

Brigid Cryan (University College Cork)

As listeners, our cognitive frameworks allow us to parse audio signals with delays of fixed latency as copies of the same signal, offset across time. What amount of variation in the playback of the delayed signal transforms the listeners' perception of the playback from identical copies into two related but independent signals? Can methodically-generated, randomly-varied stimuli help us explore the perceived autonomy of a digital voice?

The experimental device is a multipurpose delay unit built in MaxMSP to generate a melodic accompaniment via randomly variable delay. A user may adjust the delay time itself or the range of the possible rate of change of the delay time (Δdrdt). Since the playback speed of the delay line randomly accelerates and decelerates, not only does its timing shift along with these changes, so does its pitch. When the Δ value is nonzero, the user experiences the delay unit as a somewhat autonomous accompanist who makes decisions (albeit random ones).

This device can be used to generate sonic stimuli for investigating phrasal parsing in participants, working toward a generalized behavior model. Using a constant delay center, stimuli can be generated with incremental changes in the range of the delayed signal's random following behavior. The incremental/gradient nature of the stimulus allows experimental design which tests for cognitive thresholds.

The proposed presentation will include early experimental findings as well as a demonstration of a device programmed in Max MSP.

Why Community Music Matters

Charlotte Daun (University of Limerick)

This presentation offers a case study from my practice as a Community Musician in Wuppertal, Germany. Community Soundscape is a recurring project that brings together participants of different ages and musical backgrounds to create music within a social, safe, and inclusive environment. The project was designed to offer a social and musical space in which people were welcome to participate in ways of their own choosing.

Participants came from a range of social backgrounds and age groups. New participants were able to join on a weekly basis and were integrated into the social and musical processes regardless of their prior musical experience. The projects lasted eight and twelve weeks respectively and took place in two different locations. Musical

activities included group singing, composition and improvisation exercises, and songwriting. Decisions regarding musical content and structure were often adapted to the needs and dynamics of the group on a given day.

In both editions – *Community Soundscape 1* (2024) and *Community Soundscape 2* (2025) – the quality of the project outcomes could not be assessed solely in terms of artistic output. As Matarasso (1997, p. 4) argues, questions of quality, value, and meaning are not fixed and require critical reflection. Therefore, the outcomes of the project must also be understood from a social perspective. Responding to Kathleen Turner's (2021) call to pay closer attention to the language used in documenting Community Music practice, I collected qualitative data on how participants described the project and its perceived outcomes. This data was coded and condensed into key themes, providing insights into how Community Music projects can shape participants' social relationships, sense of belonging, and everyday lives.

Session 4a: Opera Studies

Exploring Research and Innovation in Jennifer Walshe's Opera *Mars* (2025)

Leanne Fitzgerald (Technological University Dublin)

Jennifer Walshe's new opera *Mars* explores more than the red planet. It examines themes around space colonisation, the role of technology and AI, capitalism and gender inequality ultimately creating an all-female mission to Mars that is subject to the same patriarchal and capitalist rules of Earth.

This presentation forms part of a larger *Mars* case study which draws from rehearsal observations and interviews with the creative team of the 2025 premiere production by Irish National Opera. It reflects on the role of research and reference material in composer Jennifer Walshe and librettist Mark O'Connell's creative process for *Mars*. Their research takes a "hard sci-fi" approach and considers the realities of space travel, how astronauts experience zero gravity and the true conditions on planet Mars. Aside from space travel, the opera also takes inspiration from internet and social media culture, digital communication technologies and reality TV. Sonically the score includes electronic audio tracks taken from actual space missions (spacecraft Orion's re-entry to Earth) and musical notations of space phenomena (the sound of lightning on Jupiter.) Synthesiser was prominent within the orchestra reflecting its use in science fiction movie scores and its popularity among astronauts' own music playlists. Video design was a key feature of the premiere production and incorporated a variety of media languages including mission control, Mars rover camera, CCTV footage as well as references to influencer culture, AI generated content and online memes.

Overall, this presentation will explore the role of research and innovation in the creation of *Mars*.

Putting on the Trousers for the Trouser Role…
in Opera Leadership in Ireland

Aisling Fitzgerald (University of Galway)

Opera is a non-inherent tradition in Ireland that is influenced by inherited operatic regimes. This paper examines what is the legacy of this inheritance and how it impacts the gender balance of key leadership roles in opera today.

Opera has always held a very complex relationship with gender both in its composition and presentation. Critics and academics have long debated the juxtaposition of traditionally accepted trouser roles, whether it be Hänsel or Cherubino, where permission for gender exchange specific to vocal fach is sought. The representation of gender is constantly purported and resonates universally both on and offstage, in the score and in the rehearsal room, in an art form which is both canonised and castigated for its character portrayal onstage.

However, where society has evolved far beyond the outdated representation of gender onstage, leadership in opera remains siloed in a domineering artistic and executive ego battle "while women are given responsibility, they are given power only infrequently." (Snow, G. 2025)

As we approach a significant juncture in Ireland's operatic history with the 75th anniversary of Wexford Festival Opera (2026), the National Opera House at 20 years (2028) and Irish National Opera at 10 years (2028), this paper asks how do we begin to address gender balance in the leadership of a 400 hundred year old discipline in a country with an operatic production history of under 100 years (Dublin Operatic Society, 1928).

Voice, Character, and Collaboration: Anastasia Robinson and Handel's *Amadigi di Gaula*

Qian Le (Queen's University Belfast)

This paper forms part of a broader study on women singers who collaborated with Handel during his London years (1711–1759). It focuses on Anastasia Robinson, an English soprano who worked closely with Handel between 1714 and 1724, performing in twelve of his operas. At least seven of her roles were either written for her or substantially adapted to her vocal qualities.

Amadigi di Gaula – a three-act opera to an anonymous libretto adapted from Antoine Houdar de La Motte's Amadis de Grèce – premiered at the King's Theatre, London, on 25 May 1715 and includes Oriana, often regarded as one of Handel's richest creations for Robinson. Building on this work as a case study, the paper investigates Robinson's collaboration with Handel through close musical analysis and archival research. Drawing on letters, newspapers, and related documents, it examines contemporary reception of both the role and the singer. Using Amadigi as a point of departure, the study reconstructs an early "voice – role – career" profile for Robinson, offering new insight into Handel's compositional process and the professional world of female singers in eighteenth-century London.

Session 4b: Music, Dance, and Climate Action
(Lecture-Recitals)

Detailed Analysis of *Pleonexia*: Ecosystems and Harmonic Series in Contemporary Composition

Aleksandr Nisse (TU Dublin)

Pleonexia, premiered by the Crash Ensemble at New Music Dublin 2025, was co-commissioned by Crash Ensemble and New Music Dublin as part of their Crash Works programme. The commission explored themes of environmental sustainability and climate action, translating these concepts into musical form.

This presentation will provide a detailed analysis of the compositional process behind *Pleonexia*, examining how two opposing ecosystems are represented musically. The first system draws on Dr. Erwin Thoma's research into tree interactions, while the second models a profit-driven, self-destructive ecosystem inspired by Rainer Mausfeld's book *Hybris und Nemesis*. The analysis will highlight the compositional techniques and notation systems employed, focusing on practical strategies for applying precise partial pitches of the harmonic series within a small ensemble.

Audio excerpts and a PowerPoint presentation will illustrate key points, providing insight into both the theoretical framework and practical performance considerations. Attendees will gain an understanding of contemporary compositional approaches to ecological themes, as well as the integration of research and creative practice in a professional ensemble context.

What Can Ecofeminist Dance Theatre and Eco Soma Approaches Offer Dramaturgy and Performance in the Midst of Climate Crisis?

Michelle Palmer (University of Galway)

This lecture-recital will explore the application of theoretical and philosophical approaches in creative development and composition processes for dance, theatre, and musical performance which is an experiential, embodied, living practice of resistance. In doing so, it will examine the value of ecofeminism and eco somatics in shaping the nature of the performing arts in the face of slow violence and the multiple socio-ecological crises confronting us.

Michelle will perform an excerpt of her practice-as-research piece, *Au Naturel*. She will then present a lecture on intuitive connection and kinaesthetic empathy with the body, with others, and with the environment surrounding us through movement. In closing, she will describe her new dance theatre iteration of *Au Naturel* with embodied and ecologically sensitive ways of allowing song to emerge in the development. Through this she will provide a space to contemplate the potentials of bringing eco soma movement, ecofeminist and dance theatre practices into various forms of performance art.

Session 4c: Cultural Connections

The Impact of Cultural Connections
on the Music of Richard Galliano

Marta Siermantowska (Technological University Dublin)

Richard Galliano has created a dynamic musical universe that thrives on interaction between reality and his musical imagination. This presentation points to the cultural and professional connections that impacted his thinking in music, and highlights how behind his professional engagements, lies a subtle interweaving of knowledge and direction toward a new style which he has developed. The following material is presented specifically with reference to the meeting and friendship with Astor Piazzolla who under the influential teaching of Nadia Boulanger had created tango nuevo. His musical path became an example and a challenge which impacted Galliano's musical decisions.

Despite the fact that Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979) and Richard Galliano never met in person, a line can be drawn toward her legacy as Piazzolla contributed his learning experience to developing new musette repertoire and style. This presentation aims to grasp the depth and modernity of Richard Galliano, an individual who continues to question and search, despite the many successes he has achieved globally. It is an opportunity to think of reflections that go beyond the surface of his work, inviting us to reconsider boundaries between music, emotion, social life, culture, and aesthetics, which Richard Galliano has crossed in a way that inspires and touches the heart.

Alec Finn's Bouzouki: Transcriptions,
Analysis and Educational Strategies

Kevin Ferreira Shortall (University of Limerick)

This paper proposes to shed light on the practice of polyphonic accompaniment in Irish Traditional Music (ITM), specifically by transcribing and analysing the entirety of the bouzouki performances of seminal bouzouki player Alec Finn (along with the melody instruments) in two different recordings, as well as selected excerpts from additional recordings. The transcription and analysis were done based on my experience as a jazz undergraduate and many years of experience as a jazz musician and educator in Brazil and the UK. The emphasis of the analysis is on how Finn's bouzouki creates countermelodies in a manner which is reminiscent of jazz in that these countermelodies describe the harmony (in jazz, it is common to say that a melody is "harmonically descriptive" when a certain chord or harmony is implied by the melody). Finally, this analysis will be used to propose educational tools derived from jazz, such as using set phrases in an improvisational context (jazz musicians will often use musical phrases they like and have transcribed from recordings in their own improvisations). In order to justify the use of such theoretical tools from outside the ITM tradition, we will consider a brief overview of available literature for the bouzouki and harmony in ITM in general, and then look at some of the jazz educational

literature. This paper will also contextualise Alec Finn's playing within the tradition, in order to show the importance of his contribution.

Irish Traditional Music and Musical Diplomacy of the Irish State in China

Eoin Kearns (Queen's University Belfast)

In an interconnected world, music fosters understanding. The increased globalisation of Irish traditional music (ITM) has ensured participation is no longer necessarily linked to heritage or place, but instead depends on an individual's choice, affinity, and belonging. It gives musicians expressive tools to connect with others through performance practices and a common stylistic language. Specific imaginaries have been selected as "intangible" resources to reflect an idealised version of "Irishness", containing implications of geopolitical and historical tensions to convey particular ideals.

This paper draws on my current research of ITM as a diplomatic tool of the Irish State in China. Since the commencement of diplomatic relations between Ireland and China in 1979, it has become an audible cornerstone in official interactions between the two nations. The 1983 tour of China by *The Chieftains* served as an archetype for subsequent State-funded musical endeavours: traditional musicians have continuously served as cultural ambassadors to enhance Ireland's cultural visibility.

The success of these performances are assessed through anecdotal evidence from State-affiliated sources as funding justification. Consequently, the enduring influence of these ambassadors both depends on and reinforces external perceptions of ITM. I analyse current and historic cultural policy, alongside embassy reports, to assess the long-term impact of State-mediated musical exchange, and critically examine how policy-makers and musicians quantify and negotiate ITM as a diplomatic tool. Coinciding with the culmination of *Global Ireland – Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025* (2018–2025), this paper seeks to question how ITM will inform future nation-branding initiatives and cultural policies.

Session 5a: Song Categorisation

Song Categorisation and Style in Musical Theatre, with a Focus on *The Bridges of Madison County* by Jason Robert Brown

Michael Young (Dublin City University)

Many categories of song type exist in musical theatre, and this paper will examine the current literature, defining these categories, and will detail the various musical characteristics of each category. Beginning with a review of foundational and subsequent scholarship on song classification, I draw on the work of Lehman Engel (1967), Bob Fosse (1980), Laura Fiss (2009), Paul Laird (2011), Kim Kowalke (2013), and Kathryn Voelker (2016). Engel's early typology of musical theatre song types

provides a historical framework, which is expanded through later contributions that address dramatic function, lyric–music relationships, and performer perspective.

While much of the existing literature focuses on the Golden Age of musical theatre, this paper integrates examples from the contemporary era to demonstrate the continued relevance and adaptability of these song categories. Comparative analyses illustrate how traditional classifications, such as ballads, rhythm songs, charm songs, comedy songs, narrative music, "I am" and "I want" songs, patter songs, list songs, and the eleven o'clock number have evolved in response to changing compositional styles and dramaturgical priorities.

The analytical framework is then applied to Jason Robert Brown's *The Bridges of Madison County* (2014). Songs from the score are examined with regard to their classification and musical characteristics. This paper argues that, despite the fluid and overlapping nature of musical theatre song categories, typological analysis remains a valuable tool for understanding narrative function and character development in both historical and modern works.

A Love for the Ages or Lost in Definition? Rethinking the Categorisation of Traditional Irish-Language Love Songs in Modern Times

Aoife Ní Laoire (Dublin City University)

In 1960, Seán Ó Tuama's *An Grá in Amhráin na nDaoine* marked a pivotal moment in the academic study of Irish-language love songs. Ó Tuama's framework, which draws parallels between the French *chanson* and the Irish love-song tradition, sought to categorise the diverse expressions of love found in traditional Irish song. His framework and use of French-derived terminology inadvertently set a precedent for subsequent cataloguing efforts within the National Folklore Collection and beyond. However, over sixty years later, the suitability and precision of these inherited categories merit re-examination.

This paper interrogates the continuing effectiveness and relevance of Ó Tuama's classificatory model in the context of modern scholarship and accessibility, drawing on examples from the National Folklore Collection. It does not seek to negate the importance of Ó Tuama's work, nor the connections that it draws, but rather seeks to investigate the shift in cultural understanding of the word "love" as applied to traditional Irish language songs and the subsequent effect of this on the accessibility of traditional love songs.

In an era where digitisation and renewed public engagement are transforming access to traditional song, this paper argues for a more dynamic and culturally grounded system of categorisation, one that recognises linguistic nuance and evolving interpretations of love. By revisiting Ó Tuama's legacy through a contemporary lens, this research seeks to redefine how we understand, frame, and experience the songs of love in the Irish language tradition.

Session 5b: Festivals

"Time Travel to the Greatest Party Since Camelot": The History of American Renaissance Festivals

Laura Reese (University of Limerick)

Renaissance Festivals (Ren Faires) are historical re-enactment events that combine theatrical performance, artisan craftwork, and immersive role-play to recreate a stylized version of Renaissance-era life. This paper forms part of a larger doctoral study investigating the role of music within Ren Faires as a vehicle for cultural expression, identity formation, and community building. It traces the origins of Ren Faires to the 1963 Renaissance Pleasure Faire in California, initiated by Phyllis Patterson, and explores how these festivals evolved from educational living history programs into vibrant, participatory spectacles deeply rooted in countercultural movements and theatrical traditions such as Commedia dell'Arte.

  The paper outlines the performative framework that supports musical expression at Ren Faires, including the use of costuming ("garb"), improvisation, and environmental theatre. While music is not the central focus here, it is contextualized within the broader aesthetic and social dynamics that shape the festival experience. The paper also addresses the commercialization of Ren Faires, the development of the Faire Circuit, and the festivals' resilience following the COVID-19 pandemic.

  By positioning Ren Faires as liminal spaces that merge historical re-enactment with fantasy and escapism, this paper lays essential groundwork for analysing how music contributes to the creation of atmosphere, emotional engagement, and cultural meaning at the faire. The wider project draws on ethnomusicology, performance studies, and cultural history to explore how musical practices at Ren Faires reflect and shape contemporary understandings of the past, community, and self-expression.

The *Sonorities* Festival and the Belfast Soundscape: 1981-1999

Katrina Tracey Cuddy (Queen's University Belfast)

The *Sonorities* Festival, Northern Ireland's festival of twentieth century music, (established in 1981) is held biennially at Queen's University Belfast and is a highlight in the city's musical calendar. With a particular focus on contemporary classical repertoire and electro-acoustic music, and the inclusion of performances, lectures, workshops, outreach events, and exhibitions, the *Sonorities* festival gives an opportunity not only to hear music which may not otherwise be easily accessible, but also provides an educational experience for those unfamiliar with this repertoire. Focusing on its early history (1981-1999), and utilising archival materials and interviews as methodological approaches, this study aims to document *Sonorities'* early beginnings as a four-day festival and outline its development to a week-long event with established local and international artists and composers in attendance. I will highlight key aspects of the festival, including the "Young Composers' Competition", and examine the festival's relationship with other organisations, including the BBC and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Personal perspectives from composers and performers present and actively involved in the festival will

feature and aspects such as programming and funding will be explored. With reference to other contemporary music festivals in the United Kingdom and Ireland, this study aims to evaluate the *Sonorities* festival against these established festivals and highlight its similarities and unique features. Finally, this study will outline how the *Sonorities* festival provided a valuable musical experience for Belfast's concert-goers, and how it made a significant contribution to Belfast's concert life.

Session 5c: Twentieth-Century Irish Music

Shaping Irishness: The Evaluation of Irish Identities in the Music and Work of Aloys Fleischmann

Christina Nastos (University of Würzburg)

The understanding of Irishness and of Irish music has been transformed within the past 100 years. Cork has been an important centre for this evolution, with influential figures such as Aloys Fleischmann occupying its space. This research project investigates the intersection of European art music and Irish traditional music and the influential legacy of Aloys Fleischmann, examining how his contributions have shaped the genre and continue to impact contemporary interpretations and practices. I focus on the Questions:

- How could Irish culture be expressed in music and how does it translate to Aloys Fleischmanns work as an educator and musicologist but also as a conductor and composer?
- How can Simon Frith's Theory of identity formation and musical meaning, and Martin Stokes' theory of identities help us understand the complex multiplicity of musical legacies and identities?

With this background I want to explore his various legacies, his visibility in Cork and highlight his compositions, in which I would like to examine how he incorporated Irish traditional music into European classical art music. To do so I will implement methods of both ethnomusicology and digital musicology, such as:

- Interviews with scholars, journalist and members of the Fleischmann Family
- Fieldwork and archival work during Cork Choral Festival
- A questionnaire about the recognition value of Irish music
- Digital tools to compare the recognition value in digital metrics

My aim is to contribute to and widen the narrative by gaining insights into how one's multiple identities and the blending of traditions can shape an artist's legacy.

Ultima Rerum: A Reappraisal of the Later Career and Music of Gerard Victory (1921-1995)

Dylan Kelly (Dublin City University)

2025 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the passing of Gerard Victory (1921-1995). Head of Music at RTÉ (1967-1982), President of UNESCO's International Rostrum of Composers (1981-1983), playwright, and prolific and eclectic composer of over 200 works, Victory's contribution to Irish musical and cultural life is on par with contemporaries Seán Ó Riada, Brian Boydell, and Seóirse Bodley. From playful "light" music to complex engagements with the latest developments in international contemporary music, he produced some of the most ambitious compositional output to emerge from 1980s Ireland with works like *Ultima Rerum* (1981) and Symphony No. 3 (1984). Yet, for a composer of such national and international significance, little is known of his life or music beyond a broad outline.

In this paper, I will summarise what is known about Victory to date and point to some of the gaps that I aim to address in my doctoral research. My study focuses on the period from Victory's tenure as Deputy Director of Music at RTÉ in the early 1960s until his death in 1995. Around this time, he acquired a new level of compositional maturity, graduating with a BMus in TCD in 1960 following periods of study with Walter Beckett, Alan Rawsthorne, and A. J. Potter during the 1950s, and receiving increased international recognition during the 1960s. I will also discuss some of the methodological problems of conducting a biographical study, outlining recent approaches to musical-biographical writing and debates around writing about contemporary music.

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